

RFP 2003-40
Additional Vendor Questions and Responses
Set # 2

Question #1:

We assume that RFP 2003-40 is not intended to be the vehicle to establish a Master Contract for the purchase of enterprise Windows servers. Is this correct, or should we plan to submit a proposal in response to this RFP for “Servers only?” If not, is any procurement action planned to establish a Master Contract for such servers?

Ans:

If a firm’s product line includes the configurations outlined in the RFP then the firm should bid on the specifications outlined, even if the bid is only for servers and not pc’s. We are not currently looking at the higher-end enterprise machines. They are not in the current RFP’s scope.

Question #2:

On this page is a list of the evaluation criteria. Would the Commonwealth provide us with the relative weight of each item?

Ans:

The relative weights of the Evaluation Criteria will be posted to the ASD website the morning the proposal responses are due

Question #3:

The RFP states that the Commonwealth will be evaluating the RFP and negotiating the contract. However, Vendor’s experience in working with consultants on another State RFP was that, although the RFP stated the same language, the Vendors ended up negotiating directly with the consultants and not the State. Who will the Vendors really be negotiating with on this RFP?

Ans:

Vendors selected for negotiation will work with a negotiation team under the lead of the Contract Officer, DIT. Members of that team have not been selected at this time, but it is possible that representatives of Silver Oak may be on that team.

Question #4:

As this proposal is due the same day and time as the Software RFP 2003-41 and both require extensive input of information, will the Commonwealth consider changing the due date of one of these RFP’s to allow them to be submitted a week or two apart. This would enable Vendors, who are responding to both, more time to focus on each?

Ans:

An amendment is being issued to address this.

Question #5:

As this RFP is for Personal Computers, Notebooks and PC Servers, does the Commonwealth have other plans for the acquisition of Storage products?

Ans:

The servers covered in this RFP are primarily the lower-end servers used by smaller Agencies within the Commonwealth, the needs of which are met by the SCSI drive expansion options already included in the RFP. High-end storage, including NAS and SAN, will be addressed at a later date in conjunction with the VITA server consolidation effort. The detailed specs and demand profile of equipment required for this effort are still TBD.

Question #6:

The RFP specifically excludes peripherals; will the Commonwealth expand its scope to include OEM branded peripherals?

Ans:

Peripherals are not within the scope of this RFP. It is possible that they may be part of a future solicitation.

Question #7:

What about printers?

Ans:

Printers are outside the scope of this contract.

Question #8:

In the notebook configuration, there is no reference for technology such as the Pentium M / Centrino. Can there be consideration to add these and other emerging technologies?

Ans:

An additional configuration has been added to Appendix D.

Question #9:

Without the ability to add rows to Appendix H, where does the Vendor put additional clarifications? There is a field for "comments" where the Vendor could reference additional information provided on an attachment. However, you also state that comments will be ignored. Can the Vendor add reference notes in the "comments" field without the Commonwealth ignoring them?

Ans:

We will unlock the spreadsheet to provide more flexibility for input. We do not have any intention of ignoring comments. You may submit Word-formatted responses to Appendices A, H and I.

Question #10:

Will the procedures for administering this contract be the same as for the current contract?

Ans:

Yes

Question #11:

Where the RFP refers to software, will the Commonwealth agree that the software terms will only apply to custom developed software?

Ans:

The Commonwealth's requirements remain as stated. You may state any objections, concerns or recommendations in Section H.

Question #12:

To a Vendor, a promotion is a pricing event that is extended to its general customer base, however, this Vendor may offer special pricing to a single customer based on a volume purchase order. Will the Commonwealth make a distinction between a promotion and a customer specific special price for volume purchases?

Ans:

A promotion is currently defined as a pricing event that is extended to the entire customer base.

Question #14:

If an Offeror submits multiple proposals, will they each receive equal consideration?

Ans:

Yes.

Question #15:

Will the vendor be expected to pay both the eVA Transaction Fee of 1% and the DIT Industrial Funding Adjustment (IFA) of 2% on all orders processed through eVA?

Ans:

Yes

Question #16:

Can a Contractor assign resellers to do the fulfillment of the bid? Can resellers be changed during the course of the contract?

Ans:

Yes. However the Contractor remains the point of contact for the Commonwealth, and retains all responsibility for the execution of the Contract. Please refer to question #19 in “Vendor Responses, Part 1”.

Question #17:

We understand that COV has not yet determined the score for each of the evaluation criteria. To foster more meaningful outreach to the small business community, we urge and request that COV to assign the maximum score under the Participation of SWAM criterion for each SWAM vendor who participates as a prime bidder. The adoption of this measure will show that COV is serious in implementing Gov. Warner’s vision of making Virginia more small businesses friendly.

Ans:

Thank you for your comment. We will take this under consideration.

Question #18:

COV requires “unlimited use of the Software Products on the machines for which it is acquired and on any replacement equipment.” No PC manufacturers will be able to comply with this requirement due to the terms and conditions of Microsoft’s software licensing. We raised this issue at the pre-bid conference. We just want to reiterate it here so as to remind COV to address it.

Ans:

An amendment will be issued to address this.

Question #19:

Would COV please impose a limit on the number of 12-month maintenance renewal periods that the Commonwealth will be able to order? The language in the Solicitation as it stands allows for indefinite ordering of maintenance renewals.

Ans:

The warranty will be for three years. Additional one-year maintenance agreements may be negotiated.

Question #20:

There is currently no pricing requested for 1-year maintenance renewals.

Ans:

These will be negotiated later due to varying carrying costs depending on the number of years of warranty the equipment has already been on.

Question 21:

Please confirm that the “internal audio speaker” COV requires are multimedia speakers mounted internally in the PC chassis and not the diagnostic speaker mounted on the system board.

Ans:

Audio speakers may be internal or external.

Question #22

Since vendors are not allowed to change widths of columns in various spreadsheets, text strings entered are not shown or printed in their entirety. Please address this issue.

Ans:

We will unlock the sheets requiring free form text input and adjust accordingly.

Question #23:

The notebook specifications call for specific CPU speeds, screen sizes, hard disk drive rotational speeds, and memory amounts. These specifications make it very difficult for commercially available notebooks to deliver 4 hours of battery operating time under full operating conditions. They may be able to do so if there are periods of inactivity during the four hours by allowing the notebook to slow down to conserve battery power.

We request that COV change the “minimum battery life” requirement to three (3) hours.

Ans:

There will be an amendment issued to address this.

Question #24:

If COV is not willing to change the specification for “minimum battery life” to three hours, would COV be willing to accept the new Intel Mobile CPU, namely the Pentium-M (a.k.a. Centrino)? Notebooks built with the Centrino technology are capable of delivering four to five hours of battery life easily. Please note that the Pentium-M CPUs are currently only available at speeds of 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 GHz.

Ans:

Please refer to Questions #8 and #23.

Question #25:

COV has the notation of “(2 DIMMS)” for each of the additional memory amount increments, 128, 256, and 512 MB. Does COV require vendors to deliver the referenced memory amounts via two DIMM modules? We can easily do this with one DIMM. Please also note that COV only requires one DIMM for the basic amount of memory that must come with each notebook. Please clarify.

Ans:

There will be an amendment issued to address this.

Question #26:

These two requirements also appear in Appendix C – PC (Desktop) Pricing. We wonder if their inclusion in the specifications for the notebooks a typographical error. Please clarify.

Ans:

See Question #25.

Question #27: We have done extensive searching, and we have not been able to locate a Quad Xeon Server that is housed in a 2U rack-mount chassis. This number of CPUs require substantial space for the server to properly ventilate. Please change the specifications to allow for the proposal of 4U chassis.

Ans:

There will be an amendment issued to address this.

Question #28:

The Pentium III CPU is two generations behind the current Intel server CPU technology. We urge that COV change the specifications to call for the Intel Xeon CPUs across the board, ranging from the single to quad processor servers.

Ans:

There will be an amendment that will address this for configuration #2. The requirement remains as stated for configuration #1. Offerors may propose higher speed CPU's in the pricing appendices under “Offeror Proposed Solutions”.

Question #29:

Who will make up the Selection Committee members?

Ans:

That information will not be made available at this time.

Question #30:

Is it mandatory to provide all of the Upgrade/Downgrade options listed in Appendix C, D, and E?

Ans:

No, but you are encouraged to provide as many of the options as you can.

Question 31:

In regards to Appendix E, PC Service Pricing, Server Configuration 3, the State has specified minimum requirements for the “Number of U’s” as 2 and “Max # of Processors” as 4. Industry standard dictates that a rack-mountable server capable of holding up to 4 processors would require the use of at least a 4U rack. Please change the “Number of U’s” to read 4 as this would be required to meet the minimum standard configuration.

Ans:

Please refer to question #27.

Question #32:

Will the Commonwealth accept a URL address to a website where company financial statements can be viewed?

Ans:

Please submit hardcopies and also electronic copies in on the CD ROM that accompanies proposal

Question #33:

How many awards do you expect to give to large/small companies?

Ans:

There is no set goal. The Commonwealth seeks to consolidate contracts and realize savings. After a review of the proposals, a decision will be made as to the number of awards that best meets the needs of the Commonwealth.

Question #34:

When is this contract expected to take effect? In 2004 after the current contract is over, or before then?

Ans:

Any contract(s) awarded will take effect upon the signing of a contract.

Question #35:

In appendix A Question # 30 could you please clarify what you are looking for? This question seems to be more suited for the Software RFP in regards to transition plans. What would the new contractor have to assume for the incumbent on the hardware contract?

Ans:

We are interested in your response to this question because there will be a tremendous amount of logistics involved if a non-incumbent were to end up a majority of the business. Key tasks may include working with end-users to gradually phase in your machines, providing training, etc.

Question #36:

The way this contract is designed right now will simply promote other agencies, schools and localities to create their own contract and not use 2003-40. The number one reason for the proliferation of individual contracts in the state is because the state contract is too restrictive in products. RFP 2003-40 does not resolve this issue.

I would suggest looking at the WSCA contract which utilizes a \$500M/yr discount level, versus the \$63M/yr for Virginia. WSCA also includes all the product sets the end users have been asking for.

Ans:

This RFP is limited in scope in order that we can provide the detailed specifications and demand profile information across the Commonwealth that will enable Offerors to provide the most aggressive pricing and allow the Commonwealth to perform an objective analysis of all proposals.

Question #37:

On page 22, the COV states "All of the items described in this section (pages 24 - 29) are requirements that the Commonwealth expects to be satisfied by the contractor." It would appear, however that the pages may be incorrect. Please clarify which pages or clauses the COV expects to be satisfied by the contractor.

Ans:

You are correct. It should state pages 22-27.

Question #38:

On page 33, the first bullet states that the Request for Proposal Response Form is page 4. I believe that this is a typographical error and that the correct page is page 2. Please verify.

Ans:

You are correct.

Question #39:

Appendix A, Question #19: Please clarify what the Commonwealth is seeking as a description regarding our company's "computer infrastructure and any long-term plans to change or upgrade this infrastructure." Is this for the entire corporation or is this for the support of this contract should our company be awarded?

Ans:

This is for the support of this contract. The intent of the question is to validate that an Offeror has the computer infrastructure to support the breadth, depth and complexity of the purchases associated with the Commonwealth.

Question #40:

Appendix A, Question #20: Please clarify what the Commonwealth is seeking as a description to the following: "Please describe your disaster recovery capabilities and procedures regarding this information." Is this for the entire corporation, certain business areas, or is this for the support of this contract should our company be awarded?

Ans:

Please refer to the previous question.

Question #41:

Appendix E, Server Configurations 1-3

Though we realize that the Commonwealth had to set a minimum standard to release this RFP, we recommend that the Commonwealth update their server specifications for all 3 servers to reflect the most current Intel processor roadmap. Intel's current processors are the Xeon DP and Xeon MP processors. The Intel Pentium III processors are viewed as older technology.

Ans:

Please refer to question #28.

Question #42:

Appendix E, Server Configuration 1

Please clarify - the requirement calls for RAID 0. Mirroring requires two hard drives. Please update the specification to require two 36GB hard drives.

Ans:

An amendment will be issued to address this

Question #43:

Due to the fact that RAID 0 requires only 2 hard drives, we request that the Commonwealth consider changing the minimum number of drive bays required to 2.

Ans:

An amendment will be issued to address this.

Question #44:

Please provide a definition/clarification of "# of External Bays". Does this mean the total number of accessible bays including hard drives and CD-Rom drives?

Ans:

This is for externally accessible bays. Hard drive bays are included under "# Drive Bays".

Question #45:

This vendor believes that the requirement for redundant hot plug power supplies limits the number of vendors who may respond to this specification to one. Please consider configuration requirement so that this allows other manufacturers to respond.

Ans:

There will be an amendment issued to address this.

Question #46:

Appendix E, Server Configuration 2

- a) Please clarify - the requirement calls for RAID 5. This requires at least 3 hard drives. Please update the specification to require a minimum of three 72GB hard drives.
- b) Please provide a definition/clarification of "# of External Bays". Does this mean the total number of accessible bays including hard drives and CD-Rom drives?

Ans:

Please refer to Questions 43 & 44.

Question #47:

Appendix E, Server Configuration 3

In order to support a minimum of 6 PCI slots, today's industry-standard four-way capable servers available today have a 4U form factor instead of a 2U form factor. Please change the form factor requirement to 4U.

Ans:

An amendment will be issued to address this.

Question #48:

Appendix E - Questions on the "Options" section

Many of today's industry-standard servers use memory interleaving technology. This requires memory to be added in pairs (1 and 2-way servers) or in quads (higher-end servers). Please change the memory items in "Upgrade/Downgrade" to simply show the amount of memory requested...and delete the "1x__MB" text. This way, vendors can select the most economical method to upgrade their servers with the desired amount of memory.

Ans:

This will be addressed in an amendment.

Question #49:

This vendor is not aware of any commercially-available rack-optimized servers that may be converted to a tower footprint. Please remove this item from the Upgrade/Downgrade options list.

Ans:

This specification is referring to the substitution of a tower unit for a rack unit, not an upgrade.

Question #50:

Current industry-standard hard drive technology roadmaps indicate that 18GB 10K RPM hard drives are at or very close to "end of life". Please remove 18GB 10K drives from your Upgrade/Downgrade options list.

Ans:

This is one of the options on the list. It remains as stated.

Question #51:

The last item in the Upgrade/Downgrade options list is "from SCSI to Fibre Channel". Is the Commonwealth looking for a means to connect the server to external fibre channel storage? Or is the Commonwealth looking for a complete Fibre Channel solution?

Ans:

The Commonwealth is looking for connection.

Question #52:

Was the April 10 deadline for the Intent to Respond a firm cutoff, or can Offerors still submit proposals?

Ans:

Timely proposals will be accepted.

Question #53:

We have begun working on our RFP response and have come across several problems in the Appendices, e.g., the tables will not allow us to specify the OEM and OEM part #s

for the options in C, D, or E, and we cannot specify different Index pricing across configuration options.

Ans:

This problem has been corrected. Please re-download the spreadsheets form our website at <http://asd.state.va.us>.